

**traveling:**

**across**

**through**

**down**

**in(words**

by Daniela Bouneva Elza

"The city carries such a cargo of pathos and longing  
that daily life there vaccinates us against revelation."

—Pain not Bread

*(Introduction to the introduction to Wang Wei)*

## Vancouver

we start here	by leaving.	the coffee taste of
early morning	streets.	
		the neon
effort of	signs	to summon
emptiness.	the mist	
	that	cools
the day's	unwanted	
	news—	charcoal
smudges		across
the white		noise of the
yawning		sky.

**past Hope**

the sign said:  
*find out what*                      *lies*                      *beyond hope*

we are                      beyond                      Hope.

the crows                      on every sign  
behind                      the number 3  
this                      their                      highway.

in the back                      my kids  
*when*                      chanting:  
   *are we*                      *gonna be*  
   *there?*

   we spend

the night                      at Nk'Mip camp  
   grounds

(as overflow)                      on a corner that all night  
   seemed

to be the one                      where

people                      needed  
to start

   fights:

   confession                      after

   confession.

"Inhabited space transcends geometric space."

—Gaston Bachelard  
(*The Poetics of Space*)

**the Okanagan valley**

such distance

the silences      as if time grows clearer with  
                         between—

a space where      the vineyards are heavy  
again:

*remembered*      dark grapes.  
a deception      sticky with      the flesh of light  
the taste of      missed rain.      the pulse—

embryo of past earth.      the seed—  
the one thing I can save resists

the pressure of thumb and  
                         index finger.

                 to run through rows and rows  
of vines away from      someone's voice

holding      the wind      in my hair.  
fingertips      soaked crimson.

*is this*  
                 *my grandmother's vineyard*

*or mine?*

"So I blurred my eyes  
and gazed towards  
the brim of my hat  
and saw a new world.  
I saw pale white circles  
roll up, roll up, like  
the world's turning,  
mute and perfect,  
and I saw  
the linear flashes,  
gleaming silver,  
like stars  
being born  
at random  
down a rolling  
scroll of time.  
Something broke  
and something opened.  
[...] I breathed  
an air like light;  
I saw a light  
like water.  
—Annie Dillard  
(*Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*)

"Whatever the thing, heart or mind,  
it is easily made glad when unobserved. "  
—Karen Solie  
(*Modern and Normal*)

## Osoyoos

the poplars are a mountain river  
rushing over through  
into the sky. under

leaves in eddies of silver wind  
words come face to face with  
iridescent fish nipping at their meaning.

in our confusion through time  
water  
rushes.

poplars understand space—

fluid wind sky earth

roots leaves.

or are they

schools and schools of fish?  
bodies dreaming  
through viscous light.

syllabic ripples as seen through  
tiny lenses  
(where one grain of sand

distorts) time

beneath

the rushing

"The swindler has gone before us  
and has left the doors of words open."  
—Lyubomir Levchev  
(*Ashes of Light*)

**on the way to Nelson**

I have not seen even one crow today.  
afraid  
to land in  
the sound of  
the river  
all I have is  
(this moment)  
wrapped  
around me—  
a memory  
in which I spend my days  
remembering  
how I have  
been here  
before.  
this distance  
re-named.  
afraid  
to enter the words I have  
laid out for the crows: poisoned  
little traps their teeth sharpened  
polished  
by history.

“The main battlefield for good is not  
the open ground of the public arena,  
but the small clearing of each heart.”  
—Yann Martel  
(*The Life of Pi*)

<b>drawing</b>	<b>maps</b>	<b>with bones</b>
we have white raven	a language has died.	but we repeat.
pour deep cups	wine as if it were	in ceremonial words read.
to remember	this white bird. we bury	
a journey taste bitter	in gratitude. in the back	past sounds of the throat.
<b>a song</b>	<b>stomped</b>	<b>underfoot.</b>
time: talisman	a detailed lost	totem in sand.
fossilized graffiti—	songs unreadable	turned inaudible.
only the beat	the fingers that raged	can feel in the feet
(the tip of red	white feathers) in a cage.	the pulse a memory of
<b>black earth</b>	<b>between</b>	<b>the toes.</b>



"No sutras, no hymns, no doctrine,  
but nature with its personal implications."  
—Pain not Bread  
*(Introduction to the introduction to Wang Wei)*

**the Kootenays**

in search of flowers	wildness	we picked
memories hand.	here. in the open one petal at	childhood
a scent		a time.
	(surprising me)	
a sound		a word can be
	what I have. misplaced)	filled with
in the light we sit with our	of the hands	moon
blooming.		

"What glitters in things is a mountain, it can't be held in the mouth."  
—Tim Lilburn

## through The Rockies

again

car trunk packed tight.      the kids  
drew    maps of black bear      moose

long-horned      sheep  
camouflaged      on the rocks.

breath- taking      peaks.

there

bright red      flower—

Indian

paint

brush.

"The acquisition of knowledge is not only a process of transformation  
for the one who comes to know; it is also a process of creation for the world at large."

—Shimon Malin  
(*The Eye that Sees Itself*)

the way (of the r i v e r

I take the path by the river. stop  
where the willow bows its head

to the water. *I am*

*the passing of time.* a shifting.  
*point of view.* slender fragile branches

sweep the surface of *this m o m e n t*  
in a permanent caress.  
(N (o) w)

flickering a string of

moments where I remember myself  
as before

*this moment.* l i n g e r here  
*in its making.*

again

pop.cans. cups. bear.bottles. butts.

I bow my head to the r u s h i n g

\*

the (p (o (o) l i) n) g)

where the water s t y r o- f o a m s.

*each time*

*the shiver*

(of knowing.

steals my gaze.  
my eyes drink.

*I have*

*mourning*

*myself*

as my heart

in the

m o s s y

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"We need to find our own way to take this place into our mouth;  
we must re-say our past in such a way that it will gather us here."  
—Tim Lilburn  
(*Going Home*)

**pilgrims of light**

venture inland and  
you know

(luminous  
before  
naming—

shifting  
surfaces. iridescent

where we lay our heads  
on the edge of glaciers.

where

we are ancient

dreaming.

every moment is distance—

*a light intake of breath,*  
*a slight startle.*  
names are

after- thoughts—  
the bones

of small things.

the distances between us— the breaking  
of light on the tongue.

"We grieve only for what we know."  
—Aldo Leopold (*A Sand County Almanac*)

<b>pilgrims</b>	<b>or mapmakers</b>	<b>(of being Here</b>
and we will chase	travel	together again.
the road's	inconclusive walk	end. and then on gravel.
directions the eddies	here harder to read.	get vague.  but we will walk
until we know this far.	the crow	that comes
where	the black road to a path.	narrows Uncertain.
we push our faces	the vines until we can	brushing almost
hear the splash		of feathers.
	if we walk on  in circles	we walk
if we leave now		
no one will we were	know	here.